

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

This bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war, and to provide information concerning the British Churches in wartime, as well as their contribution to post-war reconstruction.

Number 264

November 23rd, 1944

THE BRITISH CHURCHES LOOK AHEAD

We continue the article by Mr. Cecil Northcott, reprinted by the courtesy of *Christendom*.

III

Another instance and a notable one, of this farsighted co-operation between the Churches, is in the field of education. For many years, and especially since the beginning of the century, the Established and Free Churches have had a standing quarrel about education. It originates in the fundamental distinction between them in relation to the State. The Free Churches have opposed the use of public money for the propagation of "sectarian teaching" in the national schools, while the Church of England has maintained many thousands of its own schools, and in many instances has been able to dominate the religious teaching of certain areas. All this has led to much unhappy contention in a very vital part of the national life.

The State did not enter the field of general education until 1870, and from that time there has grown up a "dual system" in education, with the "private enterprise" Church system running alongside the State system. Most of the voluntary schools (including the so-called "public" schools) were founded within the Christian tradition and have taught the religion in a very definite Christian atmosphere aided, often, by the residential school method.

But in the "national" schools the teaching of religion has been of an unequal character, and the war has revealed its inadequacy. Recently the Government, through an exceptionally devoted Education Minister, Mr. R. A. Butler, has shown its eagerness to have the Christian religion taught systematically in the schools under its control, pro-

vided that the Churches and the local authorities concerned could agree on a plan. So there have grown up in Britain in recent years a number of "agreed syllabuses" of religious education based on the Scriptures, and it is on one or the other of these syllabuses that the instruction is to be given within the school curriculum by competent teachers. The best known of these is the Cambridge "Agreed Syllabus" (printed by Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.).

The provision of "competent" teachers for this instruction will be an onerous task, and it will offer the Churches a great chance to produce the right type of young people who will feel called to the teaching profession with the same dedication as a man feels called to the Christian ministry. Each school day is to begin with an act of Christian worship. There is, of course, a "conscience clause" which allows any parent to withdraw his child, if he wishes, from the school's religious exercises.

The Government, under the Bill, has also made generous offers to Church bodies (mainly Anglican and Roman Catholic) to help them re-equip their day schools to meet modern conditions. It has rightly set high standards for buildings and equipment; and where a Church cannot face the cost (even with the help of a Government subsidy) the school is, briefly, to pass into the control of the State and its religious teaching will be provided for under the agreed scheme. It is this point which has caused most discussion with the Roman Catholics.

While the Anglican and Free Churches have been united in support of the Education Bill it would be idle to pretend that there has been enthusiasm for what has been called "the least common denominator in religion," as the basis of instruction in the schools.

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BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICES
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30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

Many quite rightly say that you cannot teach religion without teaching doctrine about the Church. But the answer, and an effective one amongst the general public, is that if we cannot agree about the Church and its nature for presentation to the children we must at least include that on which we can all agree. We cannot afford to have a secularized education, and a Britain rapidly losing its elementary knowledge of the Christian Scriptures and the basic things of the Christian faith. Hence the "agreed syllabuses" and a happier household amongst the Churches on education than we have had for forty years!

Dr. Temple has called the new education plan a great act of "social justice." The chief feature of that justice is the ultimate raising of the age of leaving school to sixteen for those in the elementary schools. The Churches have been working for this for years—recognizing that a nation which throws seventy per cent. of its children into the world at the early age of fourteen (the present age for leaving) is creating an intricate series of problems for itself in social and industrial life. The "clever" child has a host of facilities in Britain's educational world. By the scholarship system he can pass into the universities without cost to his parents. Oxford and Cambridge have been thoroughly democratized by this method. But we have not cared enough for the "ordinary" child who becomes the average citizen. The new Bill makes provisions for him at all stages of his life including the important adult period when so many cease to learn or to develop in their mental and spiritual life. A series of Young People's Colleges is to be set up to which young people in industry and business can come for periods of learning and further study of the things they would like to learn—a plan which owes much in its inspiration to the Folk High Schools of Denmark.

One aspect of the Education Bill, however, will demand constant vigilance on the part of the Churches in Britain. Hitherto the President of the Board of Education in Whitehall has been mainly in an advisory character in relation to the local education authorities. But the new Bill authorizes him "to promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose." That is a capacious directive for the chief education officer of a central government. Many see in it all the dangerous tendencies of a totalitarian authority in a field where power to teach and control is all-important. Along with this go some admin-

istrative changes which also shift power to larger regions from smaller localities. It is a new step in English methods, but one which is being taken deliberately and with common agreement in the interests of providing the best education for the children. Its challenge to the Churches lies in two directions. There must be a new race of dedicated teachers who will see the greatness of their calling, and there must be a new generation of public-spirited men and women who will give of their time and experience in the management of local educational affairs. Only in this way shall we be able to preserve the democratic sense in our new educational plan. The Minister himself has already made that plain in commending his Bill to Parliament and the nation.

IV

Over 4,000 churches of all denominations have been destroyed by bombing. If all ecclesiastical buildings, such as schools, convents and monasteries and adjacent buildings are included, the total damage reaches 14,000 structures for the British Isles. Reconstruction and replanning will present a formidable problem for many years to come. The situation offers the Church an opportunity such as it has never had before of rebuilding on a large scale.

The Government made it known in the early days of the war that public funds would be provided for the rebuilding of the fabrics of churches destroyed, and negotiations have been going on looking toward an agreed basis of compensation. A committee representing all the Churches has been presided over by the Bishop of London, and they have recently reported on their negotiations. For this purpose the word "church" is defined as including, in addition to a church or chapel proper:

(1) Buildings which are under the same roof as the church or chapel, are structurally one with it, and form with it in effect a single building of which they are a subsidiary part, as distinct from buildings of which a church or chapel forms a subsidiary part; or

(2) Buildings (not houses of residence or non-provided schools) essential to the church or chapel for its religious work, and which form with the church or chapel a compact group of buildings making a single unit for that purpose where their sites are not separated by non-ecclesiastical properties or by a public street.

Unlike other property owners, the Churches have not been asked to make any payments into the War Damage Fund.

Much discussion has gone on in the Bishop of London's committee about the type of church which should be built, or which should replace those destroyed. The following general rule has been adopted:

Wherever appropriate, the aim should be replacement in the former materials. Where in urban areas the church stood in a prominent position, and where in rural districts it formed an integral feature of the landscape, reconstruction should be in appropriate materials and style to suit its situation. A former tower or spire should be replaced (except where harmony of design may permit substitution of a tower for a spire) although the dimensions of the new tower or spire would be smaller if the new building were itself smaller than the old.

Roof covering should be of as lasting materials as formerly and a pitched roof should not necessarily be replaced by a flat roof; the situation and design of the building should be the determining factors.

Churches of recent and not over-elaborate construction might generally be replaced by similar buildings.

In cases of plain repair, the general formula should be that "patching involves matching." Architectural features of the undamaged portions should be taken into account, and the new plain work harmonize with the old.

Many churches will not be rebuilt on their original sites: provision is made for this in the arrangements with the Government. The church concerned will decide about its removal and there will be no Government pressure. Public interest such as street widening and town planning will, however, be a major concern in church building, and one of the provisions agreed on says that "should [the sale of] the old site provide funds both for a new site and a new church, any balance will remain the property of the particular body." While as yet no specific agreements have been made between the denominations to avoid "competition and overlapping," it is generally assumed that rebuilding and re-planning will be done in co-operation, especially where new areas are involved.

(To be continued)

U. S. CHURCHES AND "WORLD ORDER DAY"

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America issued a call to 150,000 Christian Churches in the United States to observe November 12 as "World Order Day."

In a release concerning observance of the day, the Council stated:

"On this Sunday sermons on World Order will be preached from thousands of pulpits. Christians will be urged to work for the establishment of a genuine world community. The purpose will be to enlist the total strength of the Churches behind an intelligent and concerted effort to achieve a world settlement consistent with Christian principles."

The Council lists six points which it says should constitute the spiritual foundation of "Christian requirements for World Order," and six points which it designates as the political and economic foundations.

The six spiritual foundation points follow:

(1) Recognition of the fact that not only individuals but nations, state and international society are subject to the sovereignty of God and to the moral law which comes from God.

(2) Recognition, in the spirit of penitence, of the common guilt that should be shared in varying degrees by all for the present evils with which the world of nations is infected.

(3) Recognition of the Christian requirement that nations in their dealings with one another should be motivated by a spirit of love and reconciliation. Attitudes of revenge and retaliation will lead, as they have always led, to renewed conflict.

(4) Recognition of the dignity of the human person as the image of God and restoration to all men of the rights and liberties compatible with this conception of human worth.

(5) Recognition of the fact that the Kingdom of God, as revealed in the Gospel of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, transcends nation, race and class and that the peace, so far as possible, should be made to conform to this conception of the spiritual solidarity of mankind.

(6) Recognition of the fact that the Christian Church is itself a world community and that as such it may be used by God to develop his spirit of righteousness and love in every race and nation and thus make possible a just and durable peace.

The six political and economic points follow:

(1) The establishment of some form of international organization which will provide for the continuing collaboration of the United Nations and which, at the earliest moment, will provide for the participation of all nations regardless of the cleavages occasioned by war.

(2) International economic co-operation to the end that all states, large and small, may be given equal opportunity to achieve an adequate standard of living for their re-

spective peoples and that exploitation of natural resources by privileged groups and states may come to an end.

(3) The creation of an international organization to adapt the treaty structure of the nations to changing underlying conditions.

(4) Autonomy for subject peoples as soon as practicable and the establishment of international organization to assure and to supervise the realization of that end.

(5) International control of military establishments everywhere.

(6) Provisions to safeguard the rights of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities.

The Council also announces that the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, which it founded three years ago, will hold a conference of Protestant Church leaders of the United States at Cleveland, Ohio, from January 16th to and including January 19th, 1945. It is expected that from 350 to 400 Church leaders will attend the conference, the purpose of which will be to appraise the results of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference and to decide on a course of action for the achievement of their goal of a just and durable peace based on spiritual principles.

A CHURCH STATEMENT DURING "DUMBARTON OAKS"

Another sign of the close interest which American churchmen are taking in international affairs is seen in the following document, issued by the "Commission on a Just and Durable Peace" during the Dumbarton Oaks Conference.

To Public Leaders and Our People:

The Commission on a Just and Durable Peace is deeply gratified that our nation is putting forth strong non-partisan efforts to achieve with other nations a world structure to promote durable peace. Decisions of world significance are now being reached. We therefore reaffirm certain basic convictions which we earnestly hope will be reflected in what is to be done.

There must be world organization. It must not be merely an agency for the maintenance of an existing order nor merely repressive. It must deal constructively with the underlying causes of war. These include quest for power, economic and political maladjustment, exploitation in colonial relationships, racial discrimination and the denial to individuals of spiritual and intellectual freedoms. Only if world organization is curative and creative will man generally be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to sustain it.

We recognize the importance of power in any world organization when responsibly used towards a common human good. Force as one exercise of power is an accepted element of public order, domestic or international. But force of itself cannot achieve peace. Force must be made the servant of just law. If an organization of force is brought into being under such conditions that the purposes for which it may be used are ill-defined and unpredictable, it will stimulate rivalry among those who will seek to control it and thus undermine the whole effort for peace.

In their origin, any international principles which are to govern the use of force and determine when and against whom force shall be brought into play ought to reflect the balanced judgment of all the nations. The greater nations have moral responsibilities in proportion to their power and therefore no arrangement for the use of force should even in appearance be a device whereby the strong impose their will upon the weak.

In their use, any international principles ought to be equally applicable to the great nations as well as the small. Any system which granted immunity from restraints to a few powerful nations would from the beginning be lacking in moral authority and prove politically ineffective.

Any world organization ought, as quickly as possible, to be universal, and bring not only neutrals but also former enemies into association for peace. When fighting ends there will be both punishment and settlement. But if we try to make the settlement itself the punishment, the settlement will not last.

We do not expect the impossible. We know that any world organization now created is bound to be imperfect and that the future will have to mould it. But we hope that any initial defects will not involve such violations of fundamental principle as would drive men to reject the moral authority of the organization. We deem it essential that it quickly becomes the nucleus of a co-operative effort which will give all the peoples a sense of creative fellowship.

We affirm that it is true realism to reckon with the moral law as it applies to both individuals and nations. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." We believe that the only world organization which will contribute to a lasting peace is one which conforms to the law of God and opens the way for the expression of the spirit of Christ in the community of nations.—Issued by the Commission on September 21st, 1944.